

**Education Transformation Policy Commission  
Minutes for Meeting on April 13, 2009**

**In Attendance:** Don Collins, Mike Deweese, Johannah Donovan, Teri Geney, Tom James, Bill Rivard, Brigid Scheffert, Laura Soares, Martha Tucker, Kyle Weinreich, Karrin Wilks, Chris Robbins, Chris Koliba, Lisa Ventriss

**Unable to Attend:** Michele Forman, Brian Howe,

**DOE Staff:** Bill Romond, Kay Charron, Carol K

**Reflections on work to date:**

- What is stopping a school in Vermont - a policy, practice, way of thinking – that prevents the school from moving ahead with T?
- Specific example – K-12 school and neighboring K-12 schools. Wants to collaborate: calendars are diff; PD groups are different (NEK, LAPDA) – two policy areas that prevent
- List is complicated, long and interrelated; policy is one part of it; school board doesn't agree; faculty entrenched; school cal, etc. – how to move becomes entwined; data is missing; change for changes sake, -- lack of buy in - lack of commitment;
- if not mandating, how are we helping, loose/tight tension;
- change is cultural; are there ways to draft policy that can move T ahead? Loose –tight control – what are the critical pieces that need to be recommended to move ahead;
- 1) Transformation action plan? 2) New York not doing anything different; How does the PC avoid going through all this work to get to a place where nothing is changing?
- Need to believe that it needs to change; closer to those now then 10 years ago
- Calendar dispute; promising that this is happening (rather than the constant conversation on cost); what the conversation about education should be about
- J Fitzgerald; Essex Edge Academy; look for examples; has to happen from bottom up; encourage those pockets; school cal; governance; school choice; top down does not work – examples noted will help these items grow
- Issue – holding selves accountability for what is transformative; best practice is not necessarily transformative;
- Use problem solving approach to get realistic about what needs to happen; J Fitz – doing good things, but will is sustaining;

**Review of PowerPoint:**

Policy Development Cycle

**Goals for today:**

High level strategies

Work process (working committees)

Agenda:

Policy Framework

Discrepancy Definition

**Broad Conversation:** what is transformative? Have you encountered a transformative experience? What made it happen?

### **What is Transformative?**

- Changes who and what you are; Not reforming or revising; completely flipping – not interested in little changes but flipping
- Throw out the calendar; not about multiple ages; legislative work on dropouts – radical shift
- Students, teachers, administration (not the reverse); students need to be more involved and will be able to get the education they need
- Parents must be in the equation

### **Transformative Experience**

- Runner; fell on the floor; in hospital; changed the way he saw life and the way he conducted his life (eating);
- Total change about perception about life (change in belief, change in habits) perception is so impacted that you cannot go back – because of that make new choices about how you behave – translate to teachers, leaders –
- Crisis
- Transformative education – exposing to new information, experiences, to those things that they cannot see; power of information and new experiences is there;
- Not going to happen by dictating
- SDIs (School Development Institutes)
- Professional development: epiphany - I can do something differently;
- Not happening in a class; kids need to leave the system ready for the world; pressure about testing; building classroom, desks – need to throw vision out the door
- Vocabulary, experience – easy to go back to;
- Policy Framework – needs to set out what needs to happen
- Do we emulate a crisis to make this happen? Doesn't know that anything – legislatively, policy wise – we do to move ahead – not a laundry to do list that will set on a shelf
- Challenge is to do what we have to do that will realistically move the system ahead – make significant change. Not a fantasy
- Create a container and let those in the field fill it in; afraid that we will go back;
- Push me/pull me tension
  
- “need to use the SUs and the schools” – can't make change from the top down; transformation can not come from within the system;
- needs to be reality based; process, system change piece; crisis is the number of students that we are failing (transformative issue)
- Thinking with a kid's face in front of them; transformative experience: student missed last quarter of school, all As –doesn't need to be there; Daughter: wants to go to KNOLS – went, came back a totally different person – School would not accept time as credit - felt like the right thing to do
- Doesn't have to do with school – study why change happens – feel better(attitude and beliefs); save money; get a better outcome – why? Transformation is a series of things that happens that builds upon the next; creates new dynamics.

### **Converting what we know about transformation:**

- The heart of our work is to draft policies that will support schools to take actions that are truly transformative – the word “schools” is problematic – is it schools? Districts? Classrooms?
- Transformation for the “learner” – young children have no “future plan” – personal learning plan – size in VT could probably happen; could drive what goes around;
- Supports learners – who needs to take action?
- How is that delivered? In school? On line
- System is currently designed to deliver factory works; needs to have students who can think outside the box; who can work differently
- Personal education plan needs to include things that happen outside the four walls of the school
- Sit-com; parent can’t help student; asks for help with motor – “smart in this way” – what kind of system do we have that doesn’t recognize all talents?
- One way to come to terms to realize is to start somewhere: personalization is a place to start – doing it within in the confines of class, etc. – start with one concept and peel back the layers
- Role of the parent; empower parents – doesn’t want to lose the importance of parents and how they can bring about change (educate parents);
- “those are my kids” --but, what about the parent who is not involved or motivated? Parent involvement and empowerment?
- Strong support for parent involvement – parents who can’t make the right choices (abject poverty); mentorship; strong adult mentors
- relational capacity – not only with students but with staff; 2) systems constraints – location, calendar; 3) key practices that are making change (individual plans; CTE course; online course) – doesn’t want to see something so tight imposed on all schools; need to look at ways to work with kids to meet their needs (student tired of routine; dropped out; moved out west; took courses online; co-op courses – will graduate with class in June - problem here is that he had to drop out in order to accomplish this)
- Perceived constraints of the system; proficiency based measurements; SQS has option for moving beyond Carnegie Units but no one has opted to use that means
- Twinfield’s renaissance program – credits; students can take all courses through; How does that student then apply to college, transfer credits? Student is deemed proficient; meets the standard, etc.; faculty member works to translate -- others involved